product is not detrimental to the included active ingredient, be it pharmaceutical, nutraceutical, or a vitamin mineral complex.--.

Page 5, line 21, delete "flowing" and insert --following--.

Page 6, line 11, delete "desire" and insert --desired--.

Please substitute the enclosed Abstract page for the original Abstract.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 6-8, without prejudice.

Please amend claims 1, 5, 9, 12, and 17, as follows:

1. (once amended) A carrier for the oral administration of an additive selected from the group consisting of pharmaceutical, nutritional, and vitamins and minerals, [active ingredient] to mammals in a discrete dosage form, said carrier comprising:

10-50% starch,

0-40% fat or oil,

8-50% polyhydric alcohol,

5-25% sugar

5-20% water, and

1-5% salt

said carrier having an A_w of about 0.60 to about 0.75, and a soft and chewy texture, and said A_w is variable dependent on the properties of the additive.

5. (once amended) The carrier of claim 1 wherein [the] said carrier has a pregelatinized starch content [is] of about 15%.

9. (once amended) The carrier of claim 1 where the A_w is 0.65 and the [active ingredient] additive is aspirin.

12. (once amended) A method of making a carrier for an [active ingredient] additive for use in an oral administration of the [active ingredient] additive in discrete dosage form, comprising the steps of:

a) forming a matrix by mixing

10-50% starch,

0-40% fat or oil,

10-50% polyhydric alcohol,

5-25% sugar,

5-20% water, and

1-5% salt

b) adjusting the relative amounts of polyhydric alcohol and water to control the A_w of said carrier[;

whereby the controlled A_w permits the] to adjust the level of moisture in the carrier to be at a level not inimical to the [active ingredient] additive.